DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 434 755 PS 027 994

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TITLE Bullying in Japanese Schools.
PUB DATE 1999-09-00
NOTE 24p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Aggression; *Bullying; *Conflict Resolution; Elementary School Students; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Intervention; Junior High Schools; *Peer Acceptance; *Peer Relationship; Secondary School Students
IDENTIFIERS *Japan; Victimization

ABSTRACT

Noting that although many Western educators praise the Japanese educational system because of its students' academic achievements, schools in Japan have developed severe and prevalent problems with student bullying. This paper examines the problem of bullying in Japanese schools. Part 1 of the paper reviews bullying incidents in Japanese schools from the mid-1980s to the present time. Part 2 delineates three types of bullying that are common in Japan: (1) psychological; (2) physical; and (3) violent. Part 3 outlines features differentiating contemporary bullying and bullying in previous eras, including current "invisible" methods of bullying, bullying by a majority of the class, the disappearance of "brakes" on bullying incidents, and contemporary difficulties in distinguishing teasing and joking from bullying. Part 4 examines four main explanations for bullying in Japanese schools, explanations from the perspective of society, school, family, and children. Part 5 discusses the measures taken by the Ministry of Education regarding bullying and argues that such measures have been ineffective and have resulted in bullying becoming more insidious and invisible to adults in the victim's life. Part 6 presents recommendations for resolving bullying problems in Japanese schools, includes an example of a successful intervention in a Tokyo junior high school, and describes Norwegian anti-bullying programs. The paper concludes by noting that bullying is an urgent problem and that the school system needs to identify concrete and unique school-wide anti-bullying intervention programs specific to Japanese schools. Contains 26 references. (KB)

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Bullying in Japanese Schools

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My Will

All of the members of the family, please forgive me. I am now going.
In school, I was bullied by XX, XX, XX, XX, and XX (: name of bullies) who stopped coming to our house because my father scolded them once. All of these guys changed their attitude totally one day and they started to ignore me. In the time of cleaning, they stripped me of my clothes or poured water on me. There are also prank calls. Whenever I picked up the phone, they hanged up. Besides, I often lost money. If I brought two pieces of 500 yen (: $4.2) coins, I could find only one when I went home. Because of these stealing, they stole my money approximately 5000 yen ($42). There were many things I have suffered, but I cannot suffer anymore. I really feel sick of living, so please let me die. By the way, dad, thank you very much for buying me a new bicycle. I really appreciate you, even though I rode it less than a week. Please give my bicycle to XX (name of a child). These bullies also bullied XX(name of other victim in his class) and other several people. It seems that these bullies don't know how horrible things they are committing, so, I will die to show them how horrible things they are committing. Please give my clothes and coats which are still useful to XX, XX, and XX (: young children's names). Please do so because it is meaningless for all of you to keep my belongings. Please give my basketball goal to XX (: a name of his friend). All of the members of the family, thank you very much for all the things you have done for me for long years.

The Seventh Year of Heisei (1995) November 23
Kasuga Junior High 1st Year (i.e., seventh grade), Fifth Class, No. 3
Hisashi Ito

On November 27 1995, around 3:30 A.M., a person delivering newspapers found this will, placed under a boy's shoes to keep it from being blown away by the wind. Nearby, this seventh grader hanged himself from the basketball goal, 65 feet from his house (Ooyoshi & Yamato, 1995). A victim of bullying, this 13-year-old boy committed suicide.

Although many Western educators praise the Japanese educational system because Japanese students' academic achievements are often higher than those of American students (Nagaoka, 1995; Lewis, 1994; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992), the Japanese system has its own big stigma. Bull ing in Japanese schools is severe and widely prevalent.

In this paper, the author would like to inquire bullying problem in Japan in the following order. First, historical background of the bullying problem will be stated. Second, three different types of bullying that are common in Japan will be introduced. Third, the differences between contemporary bullying and bullying in old days will be acknowledged. Fourth, theoretical explanations of the possible causes of bullying will be notified. Fifth, previous remedies for bullying problem by the ministry of education and their effectiveness

will be argued. Sixth, some recommendations for resolving bulling problem in Japan will be stated.

1. Historical Review of Bullying Incidents in Japanese School System

Historically, bullying in the Japanese school system got public attention in the mid-1980s because so many children committed suicide as a result of bullying during that time (Crystal, 1994). Beginning in 1985 the ministry of education started to count the number of bullying incidents in public elementary, junior- and senior-high schools. In 1985, the total number of bullying incidents was 155,066 (elementary-96,457, junior high-52,891, senior high-5,718). The number decreased gradually every year until 1993 when the total number of bullying incidents was 21,598 (elementary-12,817, junior high-6,390, senior high-2,391).

However, many researchers pointed out that this decrease on paper was due to the inaccurate definition of bullying written by the ministry of education (Imai, 1995; Ishikawa, 1996; Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994; Tachibana, 1995). The ministry of education defined bullying incidents as: "The incidents in which bullies are doing physical or psychological attacks continuously to the person who is weaker than the bullies, and a victim feels very serious pain. And these incidents must be acknowledged by the school as bullying behaviors." (Ishikawa, 1996, p. 16). There are two main problems with this definition. The first point is vagueness of the words "continuously" and "serious pain." There were many cases of suicide victims, while teachers thought it was just playing among children or teachers did not know about the bullying incidents at all (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994).

The second point is a description, "And these incidents must be acknowledged by the school as bullying behaviors." There are many incidents of victims' suicide in which the school did not acknowledge that there was bullying behavior or that the suicide was a consequence of bullying (Ishikawa, 1996; Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994).

One of the most shocking suicide incidents in the mid-1980s happened on February 1, 1986. Hirohumi Shikagawa, a male 8th grader at Nakano Fujimi Junior High School in

Tokyo, had been in target of bullying for about eight months (Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai, 1995). Bullies drew a mustache with magic pen on Shikagawa's face and forced him to "dance the hallways and to sing from school yard tree tops" (Schoolland, 1986, p. 17). Bullies forced Shikagawa to fist fight a seventh grader against his will (Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai, 1995). In the middle of November, these bullies planned a mock funeral for Shikagawa and made a sympathy card which was signed by many of his classmates and four teachers. His 57-year-old homeroom teacher, Namio Fujisaki, wrote, "May his soul sleep in peace" (Schoolland, 1986, p. 17). Shikagawa often avoided going to school, complaining of stomach pains and headaches. In January 1986, in the last month before his suicide, Shikagawa attended school only 11 days. On February 1, 1986, he left a will and hanged himself in the bathroom of the building near the station close to his father's hometown (Maniwa, 1990). In his will, he wrote, "If such (horrible) things continue, my life is the same as living in hell." (Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai, 1995; Schoolland, 1986). His phrase: "living in hell" became one of the buzz phrases in Japanese society in 1980s. In 1991, A Tokyo district court judged this incident as "not bullying but one episode." (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994, p. 7). The court just ordered the school to pay 3 million yen ($25,000) in consolation money and 1 million yen ($8,333) for a lawyer's fee to his parents. Informed about the judgment of the Tokyo district court that the behavior of these bullies against Shikagawa were just teasing and joking, the media and school children became very angry and said that if this incident was not bullying, then what else would be acknowledged as bullying. (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994; Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai, 1995).

In addition, if a teacher reports an accurate number of bullying incidents, it also implies that the teacher himself or herself has little power to control the class; this would decrease the possibility of promotion to become a principal (Ishikawa, 1996; Tachibana, 1995).

Many researchers have stated that the number of bullying incidents had not really decreased; instead, bullying behaviors had become more wily and more hidden from the eyes

of adults (Imai, 1995; Ishikawa, 1996; Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai, 1995; Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994; Tachibana, 1995). But we can see the frequency of real bullying from pupils because bullying is occurring daily in their world. Morita (1995) asked 153 classes of students whether there was a bullying incident in their class during the last year or not. There were 83.1 % of classes in which more than 20 % of the students in the class said yes. He chose the 20% line because it meant that at least 8 to 10 students in a class (i.e., typical Japanese junior high school class has 40 to 50 students) knew that a bullying incident happened in their class. For contemporary Japanese students, bullying incidents are not abnormal but everyday and ordinary incidents in their school life (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994).

As proof that the ministry of education had defined "bullying" incorrectly, a shocking suicide incident happened in November 1994. A male 8th grader, Kiyoteru Okawauchi, hanged himself and left a long will. Four boys in his class had bullied him for more than two years and this young boy had paid the four bullies approximately 1.1 million yen ($9167) prior to the suicide (Tachibana, 1995). Because of this incident, the ministry of education ordered public schools and the Board of Education to investigate bullying incidents in the schools from the viewpoint of the victims. From December 1994 to the middle of February 1995, there were 17,788 new incidents of continuous bullying identified (elementary-8,477 junior high-7,906, senior high-1,291) in the Japanese public schools. This number supported what many researchers had insisted, that bullying incidents were not decreasing but had, in fact, simply become more insidious and invisible from the eyes of adults. In 1994, based on the new statistics, the ministry of education cut off the end of the definition (i.e., "And these incidents must be acknowledged by the school as bullying behaviors."). The final number of bullying incidents in 1994 totaled 56,601 (elementary-25,295, junior high-26,828, senior high-4,253), which was more than twice than that of 1993 (Ishikawa, 1996).

The Japan Youth Research Institute has claimed that the bullying problem in Japan is less serious than that of the U.S. because 73 % of 880 Japanese junior high school teachers reported bullying incidents in their classes, while 84 % of 812 American junior high school

teachers reported incidents (Schoolland, 1986). This comparison does not make much sense because many Japanese bullying incidents happened without being acknowledged by any adults (Imai, 1995; Ishikawa, 1996; Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai, 1995; Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994; Tachibana, 1995). Morita and Kiyonaga (1994) found that 77 % of sixth graders and 62 % of eighth graders had been involved in bullying incidents, either as a bully or as a victim of bullying behavior. Therefore, bullying in the Japanese school system remained a serious problem in contemporary Japanese schools as recently as today.

2. Three Types of Bullying

Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai (1995) reported three major types of bullying found in the Japanese educational system. The first type is *psychological bullying*. For example, a victim was called bad names by bullies in order to make fun of the victim. Gradually, many classmates would join in and start to call a victim by derogatory names. When a victim would enter a classroom, many classmates would open a window and say, "A germ carrier! The air in this classroom is polluted by this person!" Bullies made prank calls to victims. A worse-case scenario would be that a bullying victim might be excluded from every activity in the class. No one would play with the victim during recess or after school. Everyone in the class would ignore the victim as if the victim did not even exist. No one would greet the victim. Mock funeral might even be arranged by a majority of the class.

The second type is *physical bullying*. Bullies might hide the victim's notebook paper, text books, notebooks, shoes (i.e., In Japanese school, students wear in-school-shoes in school buildings), and other personal belongings. Bullies would write bad things on the victim's personal belongings. Bullies might steal or destroy a victim's personal belongings. Bullies would use a victim's bags like a soccer ball, kicking it around. Some bullies would paint butter on a victim's chair, and if a victim then sat down in the butter without noticing, bullies would call him "a butter butt." When a victim was absent from the class during recess, bullies might put raw eggs into his bag. Then these bullies would kick the bag. Also bullies

would often force a victim to buy their used T-shirts, socks, and stationary at expensive prices.

The third type is *violent bullying*. Bullies would force a victim to participate in mock Karate or a wrestling match where the victim is likely to be beaten up. When a victim walks among the chairs in the classroom, bullies would extend their legs and make the victim fall down. Bullies might stand around a victim and beat him up. Bullies might force a victim to stand against the wall while they taped him to the wall using masking tape on his forehead, neck, wrist, and legs. A blindfolded victim could be beaten up. Bullies might strip the victim of his/her clothes. They might burn a victim's hand or arm with cigarettes or matches.

There are other kinds of bullying which incorporate more than one of the preceding types. For example, bullies would force a victim to hit another student or shoplift in a shopping center, and then use blackmail to force the victim to bring the money to them. In reality, most bullying involves a mixture of all three types. For example, in 1985 a male ninth grader in Fukushima prefecture committed suicide because of bullying . A group of bullying boys force him to pay them. If he could not pay them, they beat him up. When family members asked him about bruises on his face, he just explained that he had fallen down. Some of the bullies scribbled "Stupid" on his textbook. These bullies had several other victims whom they forced to hit this ninth grader. This a typical example of how most bullying incidents tend to include *psychological* (i.e., threat), *physical* (i.e., money or merchandise), and *violent* (i.e., if not, victim will be beaten up) aspects of bullying.

3. Characteristics of Contemporary Bullying as Compared to Bullying in Days Past

Some adults and teachers have said that bullying has existed for a long time ago. But there are several different features in contemporary bullying incidents in Japanese school system compared to the bullying that occurred in years past (Ishikawa, 1996; Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai, 1995; Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994).

First, in contemporary bullying, anybody in the class could be a victim of bullies. For example, Hisashi Ito (the victim who left the will on the first page of this paper) was an excellent student. His academic achievement was around tenth within approximate 200 seventh graders in his junior high school. He practiced basketball in his basketball club in school, and he was chosen as a class representative during the first semester (Ooyoshi & Yamato, 1995). His bullies were not labeled as bad students by the classroom teacher. Kiyoteru Okawauchi, who reportedly was forced to pay about 1.1 million yen ($9167) to bullies in his school and who committed suicide in 1994, had mid-level academic achievement. The five students who bullied him also had mid-level academic achievement (Tachibana, 1995). Because groupism in Japan is so strong, anybody who is different from the majority group is a potential target for bullying. Students who are serious or who have excellent grades or are remarkable in some particular talents could become victims of bullying. A student's shoes may disappear just after he or she has received high praise from teachers. Excellent art work which is exhibited in class could be stolen or destroyed (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994). Ninth graders have particular difficulty in forming friendships with their classmates because their classmates are rivals in their high school entrance examination (Ishikawa, 1996).

Second, the methods of contemporary bullying are insidious, wicked, and invisible to most adults and can therefore potentially continue over a long period of time (Crystal, 1994; Ishikawa, 1996; Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994). In days past, bullying behaviors were done to newcomers and naturally eased after newcomers achieved some of the same characteristics of the majority. It is much easier to be like others because there was not so much competition in the school system. In addition, everyone was poor after W.W.II; therefore, it was very difficult and morally wrong to waste cigarettes or butter or eggs or bags (i.e., physical type of bullying). But now Japanese society has become richer than ever before. Since bullying in schools has gotten public attention, the ministry of education has punished bullies. The attitude of the ministry of education that encourages severe punishment against bullies seems

to have gotten harder and harder. Mr. Yosano, who was a minister of education on March 19, 1995, said, "When human beings become 13 or 14 years old, they have much information and power of judging right and wrong. We must make sure that they also must take responsibility (for what they did) appropriate to their age" (Ishikawa, 1996, p. 136). Therefore, bullies have begun to carry out their bullying behaviors more furtively . If bullying behaviors are noted by adults, the bullies just say, "We are just playing with each other. It is just a joke" (Nagaoka, 1995).

Third, contemporary bullying is not only done by one or two bullies but also could be done by a majority of the class. In the old days, bullies were just aggressive boys. But now, anybody in the class could be a target or a victim; therefore, if someone becomes a target of bullying, everybody could either join in the bullying or ignore the incidents. If they do not join in the bullying, these students will have a high probability of being targeted next (Ishikawa, 1994; Maniwa 1990).

Fourth, the brakes on bullying incidents have disappeared. If bullying incidents happen, a majority of classmates now try not to get involved but may join in the bullying because they are afraid of becoming the next target. Commercial films and TV educate contemporary children with a "Do it now" and "If you want it, just buy it" attitude in order to increase their sales. Therefore, contemporary children have become impulsive and have a hard time controlling their behavior. This makes it easier for bullying to occur. In addition, the values of justice and seriousness have slowly been devalued in many Japanese students (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994; Sengoku, 1995). Since Japan was astonished about the technology of western civilization 130 years ago, Japanese have been working hard and seriously studying in order to develop similar standards to western countries. But this aim was accomplished in the 1970s, and TV programs and comic books (i.e., In Japan, comic books are a significant media for children) started to make fun of the values of justice and seriousness (Sengoku, 1995). Therefore, if one student tried to stop the bullying, he or she

would be made fun of by bullies who would say "Hey, are you a person of justice ?" or might even become the next target of bullying.

Fifth, with contemporary bullying it is very difficult to distinguish teasing and joking. There is much teasing-style bullying because contemporary bullying is very *inshitsu* "literally meaning the 'dampness of shady places,' to suggest the sneaky, secretive, and indirect cruelty" (Crystal, 1994, p. 251). One good example is the game called "crucifixion." Several children play the game of "scissors=paper=rock". The loser stands facing the wall, extending both of his arms like a person who is crucified. Then the other kids kick the ball trying to hit him. If the victim is not liked, everyone hits hard, aiming at his head or body. But if more popular kids lose, they intendedly miss the target (Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai, 1995). If a victim decides not to play this game, everyone could exclude him from all kids' activities. As is evidenced by this example, contemporary bullying is particularly cruel.

In the beginning stages, bullying starts as teasing, joking, and playing. In this stage, bullies find a target for their bullying. The weakest child who cannot resist the bullying becomes the fixed target. Teasing, joking, and playing escalate to become bullying behaviors (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994). Therefore, the Shikagawa incident was ruled not as bullying but as simple teasing and playing in the world of children. This verdict was handed down in a Tokyo district court in 1991 (Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai, 1995).

4. Explanations of the Causes of Bullying

There are four main explanations of the causes of bullying in the Japanese school system. These are explanations from the perspectives of society, school, family, and children (Ishikawa, 1994; Jinbo, Totuka, & Nishi, 1986).

The first explanation was from the perspectives of society and its culture (Ishikawa, 1994; Jinbo, Totuka, & Nishi, 1986; Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994). Maniwa (1990) stated that a Japanese fundamental belief is groupism, which emphasizes that the benefits of the group overcome the individual benefit. In Japan, "group life is accustomed to see something

sacrosanct. Sometimes, individual private life was sacrificed in order to retain a group" (Maniwa, 1990, p. 62). Maniwa (1990) explained Japanese group dynamics by using two terms, inclusion and exclusion. In the function of inclusion, the group forces each member to be like each other. Of course, an outsider can enter the group only when he or she behaves as those in the majority group do. If a member of a group cannot become like the others, he or she will be the target of the other function: exclusion.

The Japanese educational system requires its student to be competitive, and its examination hell is famous in other industrialized countries (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992). Additionally, Japanese children feel obligated to go to school no matter what happens (Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai, 1995). In the Japanese school system, students compete to fit in to the system and those who cannot fit are excluded from the group. In addition, those who are different from the majority of the students will be excluded. Therefore, in the Japanese society, bullying performs the function of designating a "scapegoat."

In addition, society shows children the model of bullying (Ishikawa, 1994; Jinbo, Totuka, & Nishi, 1986). When bribes between politicians and big companies appear in public, politicians often proclaim that they are too sick to answer a summons as a witness in the congress. Even if they attend, they usually make excuses saying that they do not know anything about such a large amount of money and their secretaries must have accepted such things without notifying them. CEOs in large companies also claim that only one employee uses a company's money without notifying anybody. Usually, these scapegoats (i.e., secretaries and the employees who actually pass the bribe to secretaries) will be punished or sometimes they commit suicide. Children and young people have learned from such behavior by public officials that there is little justice in society and it is okay to single out scapegoats in society (Ishikawa, 1994). Bullying in big companies is common in Japanese society. Anyone who is different from the majority will often become a target of bullying. The employees who belong to the Communist party are less likely to be promoted, to earn more wages than others, to be enrolled in company housing, or to be included in cultural and exercise festivals

of the company (Ishikawa, 1996). Children and young people learn that being the same as the majority group is the best way to survive in the Japanese society.

Morita and Kiyonaga (1994) pointed out that due to urbanization and the self-sufficiency of the nuclear family, society itself has lost some of the power of raising children properly. For example, in the old days, if an adults found children misbehaving, they usually scolded the children. But now, adults are more likely to ignore children's' misconduct.

A second explanation was made from the Japanese educational system. In comparison to American educators, traditionally Japanese educators believe that they should not intervene in children's peer relations, but rather that children should govern themselves. In some ways this philosophy works well. For example, most elementary school children are capable of following their own rules, because the rules are made by themselves (Lewis, 1994). But this educational philosophy turned out to be negative when applied to bullying. Compared to the American system, in which parents and teachers frequently intervene in the world of their children, Japanese teachers and parents hesitate to intervene. Therefore, bullying in Japan is more invisible to adults than it would be to American teachers and parents. Victims also hesitate to tell adults about their suffering because they also feel that asking the help of adults is an unmanly thing to do (Nagaoka, 1995).

In addition, the contemporary Japanese education system enforces two things on students' lives: extreme competition and controlled education. Since Japan first became an open country, academic achievement (especially, graduating from prestigious universities) has been a key factor in economic success. In order to enter the good junior- and senior-high schools and prestigious universities, children have been forced to study hard. According to data of the ministry of education in November 1993, approximately 500 million elementary and junior high school students in Japan go to cram schools. Specifically, 67.1 % of ninth graders go to cram schools for preparing for high school entrance examinations. Average monthly fees for cram schools per person is 12800 yen ($106.7) for elementary school student and 17100 yen ($ 142.5) for junior high school students. Parents answered "yes" to

the following statements: (1) Extreme competition on entrance exams is a bad influence on children's healthy personality development (elementary - 59.5 %, junior high - 54.3 %), (2) Contemporary children lack enough playing, social activity, interaction with other family members (elementary - 56.2 %, junior high - 42.3 %). In summary, parents admit that extreme competition makes for a negative influence on children's healthy development (Ishikawa, 1996).

Because of the extreme competition, students started to exhibit problematic behaviors (i.e., juvenile delinquency and violence in school) in 1970s (Ishikawa, 1996; Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994; Tachibana, 1995). A solution suggested by the ministry of education and the Japanese school system was corporal punishment, in the philosophy of "eye for an eye," and strict control of students' school life. Most public junior high schools have "exacting and complicated rules and regulations on virtually every aspects of a student's personal, social, and academic life, both on and off the school grounds, both day and night" (Schoolland, 1986, p. 7). For example, the length of the skirt in girls' uniforms is fixed in typical junior high schools (Ishikawa, 1996). When teachers find a violation by the students, they punish, sometimes corporally, although "article 11 of the School Education Law specifically bans corporal punishment" (Schoolland, 1986, p. 10). Schoolland (1986) suggested that corporal punishments by teachers is the mother of bullying. Students learn that it is okay for teachers to use violence against the weak (i.e., students) in order to govern students. It is also acceptable to use violence to control the weakest in the school system (i.e., victims of bullying). But teachers and adults are still hesitant to intervene in children's conflicts. What schools control is students' behaviors and clothing and their belongings when visible to the adults' eyes.

Thanks to corporal punishment and education controls, school violence and physical juvenile delinquency drastically decreased in the 1980s. Interestingly, following this decrease, bullying problems became more serious (Ishikawa, 1996). Kikkawa (1987) found the result supporting the shifting trend from school violence to bullying and school refusal. In

surveys to teachers in 85 junior and senior schools in Tokyo Metropolis, Kikkawa found that although school violence occurred in 17.6 % of all 85 schools, 95.3 % of them had school refusal and 76.5 % of them had bullying.

Teachers are too busy with their own everyday routines and lecturing. The teachers who spend time with students or devote their life to correcting students' misbehavior have only a small chance of being promoted to a principal. The teachers who become principals are those who submit research papers in education, those who belong to unions, leaders in the teachers' study groups. In short, being a leader in school politics or having the ability to use computers are two leading factors for promotion to principal (Tachibana, 1995). Therefore, it seems likely that the deficiency in the Japanese educational system (i.e., extreme competition, corporal punishment and controlled education), along with the Japanese educational philosophy of non-intervention, may contribute to the bullying problem in Japanese schools today.

A third explanation comes from the perspective of family. After W.W. II, Japanese families have become nuclear families, and the childbirth rate has decreased drastically (Jinbo, Totuka, & Nishi, 1986; Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994). Therefore, contemporary children have lost opportunities to interact with siblings. In addition, Japanese fathers must work too many hours, and they cannot interact with their children or teach social rules (Ishikawa, 1996; Crystal, 1994). Absence of interaction with fathers is a negative effect on children's social development and peer-relationships (Biller, 1982). Japanese mothers devote their energy to raising their children and children sometimes grow up overprotected without any scolding when they misbehave. Accordingly, some children grow up without learning social rules and discipline from parents.

A fourth explanation is from the perspective of students themselves. Prewitt (1988) predicted that bullying is caused by mild to moderate emotionally disturbed or retarded students or students who suffer learning disabilities. Because Japan is an egalitarian society, excellent facilities are available for severe physically and mentally retarded children, but mild

mentally retarded children or emotionally disturbed children must follow the rigid Japanese educational system. After failing to follow the academic standard, these emotionally disturbed or learning disabled students may bully mentally retarded students. Ishikawa (1996) pointed out that young people in Tokyo have become more frustrated in the past twenty years. His survey classifies young people, ages 15 to 29, in Tokyo into four types. The first type is a "serious and honest" type, the second is "seeking present fun" type, the third is "going my way" type, and fourth is "frustrated" type. From 1976 to 1994, the serious and honest type has decreased from 36 % to 25 %, but the frustrated type has increased from 21 % to 34 %.

Kiyonaga, Mugishima, and Takahashi (1985) found three major motivators for bullying among 304 males and 91 females who were arrested by the police between June and July 1985 in Japan. The first reason was vague anger against victims (30.4 %). The second reason was domination of the victims (22.9 %), and the third reason was envy for the victims (9.6 %). Therefore, bullying is one of the avenues for venting young people's frustration (Ishikawa, 1996; Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994).

In summary, there are many mixed factors that contribute to bullying. But social perspectives on the causes of bullying explain contemporary bullying behaviors most accurately, both within the Japanese school system and also in Japanese society itself. Around 1986, people in education and in the mass media reported that students with bad grades are bullies and they bully in order to find an outlet for their frustration. They pick on victims who are shy and reserved (Prewitt, 1988; Tachibana, 1995). But contemporary bullying incidents include not only students who have bad grades but also those that are shy and reserved students. Researchers have pointed out anybody who is different from the majority in the class have a possibility of being involved in bullying incidents (Morita & Kiyonaga, 1994; Tachibana, 1995).

Morita and Kiyonaga (1994) proposed their model that has four layers of bullying. The first and second layers are the victim and his/her bullies. The third layer is identified as the audience, who enjoy watching and cheering the bullying behavior. The fourth layer is

made up of bystanders who ignore, and show indifference to, bullying incidents. The fourth layer sometimes produces a mediator who intervenes and tries to stop the bullying. Morita (1995) found the correlation between bystanders and bullies ($r=.3119$, $p<.05$), as well as between bystander and audience ($r=.3260$, $p<.05$). This means that the more bystanders there are, the more bullies and audience there will be. This figure supports the explanation of contemporary bullying which states that group dynamics in contemporary Japanese classrooms have forced a loss in brakes to stop bullying. Although bullying is caused by a mixture of many factors, social and cultural factor can explain the fact of prevailing bullying incidents not only in school but also in any groups in the Japanese society.

5. Measures Taken by The Ministry of Education and Their Consequences

Since bullying in schools began to receive public attention in the mid-1980s, the ministry of education avoided investigating the causes of bullying. What was done was punishment on bullies as well as on teachers who could not stop the bullying. Following the shocking bullying incident of Okawauchi, who paid bullies about 1.1 million yen ($9167) and committed suicide in 1994, the ministry of education publicized "Bullying Emergency Convention Report Measures What Should Be Done For This Moment" on March 1995. This report has two major points. The first follows the existing trend: encouraging more severe punishment for bullies. The second involves a vague treatment of bullying. For example, it emphasized the importance of resolving the bullying problem by "homeroom teachers' self-awareness and responsibility," "cooperation of all members of the school," "encouraging an active role for intervention by a teacher in charge of health education," "teachers' study and training for bullying problem," encouragement of counseling" (Ishikawa, 1996, p. 132). In addition, punishment was often physical (Ishikawa, 1996; Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai, 1995).

The consequences of all this is that bullying has become more insidious and invisible to the adults in the child's life. Morita (1995) found that the number of victims of bullying

and school refusals are positively correlated ($r=.2236$, $p<.005$). In Morita's survey, 87.7 % of victims expressed that they felt too sick to go to school, to some degree (i.e., often, sometimes, or once in a while). A Japanese psychiatrist, Honjo (1988), found that six out of ten of his school refusal clients started out refusing to school because of bullying.

Numerous researchers have pointed out that the majority of school refusals is caused by being a victim of bullying (Crystal, 1994). Nihon Bengoshi Rengokai (1995) pointed out that victims use school refusal as a refuge from bullying. There were 77,000 students who refused to go to school in the Japanese school system from elementary to senior high in 1994; these facts are based on the statistics of the ministry of education (Ishikawa, 1996). Jimbo and Hashimoto (1995), however, questioned the credibility of the ministry of education's data on school refusal. According to the ministry of education, 0.91 % of eighth graders were absent more than fifty days during the school year. However, 16.2 % of eighth graders were absent from school less than fifty days because they simply do not like to go to school. If we add the number of students who delay going to school or come home before school is out because they dislike school life, approximately one out of four eighth graders can be classified in the school refusal category (Jimbo & Hashimoto, 1995).

In March 1991, the ministry of education publicized new guidelines for teaching methods for teachers (Shin Gakushu Shido Yoko). These guidelines emphasized the fostering of creativity in each student and encouraged individualism in the schools. Although this guideline has many beautiful descriptions of creativity and individualism, it actually stands on the philosophy that human ability is genetically determined. This guideline emphasizes the cramming of knowledge in the early grades in elementary school for the sake of selection but in the name of creativity and individualism. These guidelines have been strongly influenced by business circles (Ishikawa, 1996). The Federation of Economics Organization, a group of CEOs in big companies who think that Japan's major industry is high-tech, believe that Japanese industries need extraordinarily intelligent engineers and creative employees. They believe that education should produce such people. In order to

encourage people to be more creative within different abilities, education should select students by ability in the early grades and all students should receive the education they deserve according to their own abilities. This philosophy is opposite of the traditional educational philosophy of Japan, which emphasizes the "nurture" side in the nature vs. nurture debate (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989).

6. Possible Resolution for Bullying in Japanese Schools

Once again, the ministry of education has not implemented any specific and concrete steps to resolve the bullying problem. Ishikawa (1996) found one success story on the resolution of bullying in one junior high school in Tokyo. Teachers and staff members in this school, Yokoyama junior high school, started to discuss the bullying problem beginning in 1990 and determined five principles of commitment. First, teachers would carry out the lecture however noisy students were. Second, teachers would try to build a better school environment (i.e., cleaning). Third, teachers would respect students' individual rights. Fourth, teachers would acknowledge the autonomy of students in the school. Fifth, teachers asked for the support of parents and local residents in tackling this problem. From 1990 to 1991, teachers listened intently to the voices of students, parents, and local residents. Teachers changed school regulations according to the Japanese constitution and the School Education Law in 1992. Teachers made student government the center of school life and fostered the idea that students would help deal with bullying problems. Unfortunately, Ishikawa (1996) did not mention how much the bullying incidents decreased. However, the student government in this school and the whole school organization did conduct a "banishment of bullying" campaign during 1994 and 1995. This is definitely a formula to consider in decrease the incidence of bullying in schools.

Bullying is not only a Japanese problem but also is shared by many different countries, such as Scandinavia (i.e., Norway and Sweden), the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, Ireland, Spain, and America (Olweus, 1994; Olweus,

1995). Therefore, it may be a good idea to find out how other countries deal with the bullying problem. Studies of bullying began in the early 1970s in Scandinavia. There is an outstanding school-wide anti-bullying intervention program in Norway. The first one was made by Olweus (1994, 1995) and has been implemented in Bergen, Norway, for 2.5 years since 1983. Subjects were 2,500 students whose ages ranged from 11 to 14 in 42 elementary and junior high schools. The main findings were that there was a 50% decrease in bullying incidents between 8 and 20 months of intervention. Besides, there were "clear reductions in general antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, fighting, pilfering, drunkenness, and truancy)" (Olweus, 1995, p. 198). There has also been an increase in students satisfaction with school life.

This Norwegian program has several major characteristics which are common to the cases of Yokoyama junior high school. The first one is the intervention of adults, including parents and local residents. The second is cooperation among all adults, including teachers, parents, and local residents. The third is that teachers investigated the reality of bullying incidents in their schools. Fourth, students' self-governing and autonomy become the force to decrease bullying incidents. It may be unrealistic to implement the Norwegian program in Japanese schools because of cultural and educational philosophy differences. But it may be a good idea to learn about outstanding school-wide anti-bullying intervention programs in foreign countries and successful cases in Japan and devise a unique school-wide anti-bullying intervention program specific to the Japanese schools. In addition, Newman and Horne (1999) reported the bullying prevention program that made from modification of this Norwegian bullying prevention program was found effective in middle school teachers' intervention skills in the U.S.

If we continue to have bullying problems, it will have a devastating effect on the future of this world. Smith (1991) stated that victims probably lose self-esteem and confidence. Morita and Kiyonaga (1994) prophesy that bullies become people who enjoy hurting others. Victims become the people who cannot believe anybody. Surrounding

children are adults who ignore social evils and concentrate on their individual lives. About 35 to 40 % of male bullies in sixth to ninth grade have committed " at least three officially registered crimes by the age of 24" (Olweus, 1995, p. 198).

Accordingly, bullying in the schools is an urgent problem and one of the highest priority problems in many countries. The Japanese school system needs to determine concrete and unique school-wide anti-bullying intervention programs specific to Japanese schools.

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